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548 566 Bond service. Bond service is different from slavery in that it is not the result of a conquest in war of one group by another, but rather the consequence of economic decline, since when a group cannot support its members, they sell them. Years ago large numbers were sold to Venezuela as farm hands to the Caribbean Islands, etc., and although the investment was never very safe, due to the escaping of the Indians, the sales were numerous, and even today they are very frequent. Furthermore, it is common practice at the present time in the Jarara region, short of resources in summer, to take the nephews and nieces of an individual who has been forced by necessity to commit robbery as bond servants to repay by their own labor what was stolen.

Women in this situation, separated from their group and unable to be helped by them, are coveted by the men. Those who are sent away, on their return, find themselves in a situation similar to that of slaves who have come back. They settle in the cities and turn to prostitution, as the whites find in them a simple solution of their problems, and they find a means of subsistence.

548 177 The mestizo. Cross breeding /mestizaje/ has not affected Guajiro culture in respect to the tradition regarding magic, language, organization, etc., but has had an effect on social morality, which /75/ is readily forsaken by the mestizo woman of lower class, commonly called cabeza loca ("madcap"), by the general run of Indians, owing to her sexual promiscuity, her easily becoming a prostitute and giving herself and living for certain periods of time with a man, (mestizo or white as a general rule) to leave him later to follow an endless chain. The pure-blooded Guajiro woman, even if she takes to prostitution, never abandons, from any motive, the established norms of modesty, [578] such as never to show herself naked, never to behave rowdily, etc., as there is no greater insult than that a man should affirm such things about her. The mestizo woman, however, does not respect these concepts. For this reason she is sought after more and more, and she freely and openly throws over the traditional

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175 ever more and more and more difficult to conquer. In fact,
567 when we came into the lands of the Guajiro the Cacique came
648 to meet us with two Negroes as lackeys, dressed in bright red uniforms with all the corresponding facings and braid, something which was quite a novelty to me and made a deep impression." (1)

1. Ibid., 2nd XIV, 159.

BOND SERVICE

566 There is a fundamental difference between the concepts of slavery and bond service in La Guajira. While it is certainly true that in both cases the liberty of the individual is restricted, it is also true that it is restricted in different degrees. Similarly, we can state that while in slavery the owner has absolute rights over the person of the slave, in the case of bond service he has power only over his working potential.

Bond service includes certain groups whose economic, social, and numerical situation has weakened; they are clans which, to a certain point, are without effective male backing and who for this reason attach themselves, if not by law at least by act, to a family of superior position belonging to a strong group, in exchange for the use of their services.

Origin. Bond service has three causes. First, the voluntary sale of men and women, and particularly of children /en la edad infantile/, by their immediate owners, the mother, the maternal uncle of most authority, the grandmother, and the maternal aunts being considered as such; second, when a group cannot comply satisfactorily with its economic-social commitments, such as the payment of debts, indemnity for an offense, etc.; and, third, in cases of social inferiority in which the application of the law is up to the offended party, and certain members are taken from the lower social group as bond servants, especially when the offense committed is robbery.

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566 Obligations of the master. It is obligatory on the part of the master to supply his bond servants with quarters, clothing, and food; in this last respect /food/ the bond servants occupy the lowest place together with the slaves, that is, they get the leavings from the master's meals, and special food made for them consists almost entirely of corn mazamorra.

Duties of bond servants. Female bond servants are generally employed in domestic work: cooking, drawing and carrying water, collecting firewood, picking cultivated fruit, gathering wild fruit, taking care of the masters' children, nursing sick members of the house, and going with the masters when needed to carry out these duties while the latter are on the move.

The men on their part engage in agricultural activities during the times of the year when this is possible and regularly work at pasturing; beyond these labors they have to do others in the masters houses with regard to work that requires masculine co-operation.

Their legal position in the Guajiro community can be described thus: As they are not members of a clan group exterminated by war but rather lowered by their precarions economic circumstances, their position and rights are in intimate relation with the social power their group may still have. This means that if the group to which a bond servant belongs, by alliance or by any other circumstance, is able to present a compensation claim to the master, it can in this way keep the bond servant from being mistreated, made to shed blood, or killed, for in any of these cases the bond servant's relatives may make a claim against the master or perhaps attack him, and he will find himself obliged to pay the indemnity.

Any violation or abuse committed on a female bond servant evokes a demand for the corresponding payment, made not by the master; as in the case of slavery, but by the bond servant's own relatives. The same thing happens in cases of pregnancy.

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566 All this indicates to us that the bond servant is an individual who in spite of not being able to freely dispose of his labor is an active member of society. His services are not voluntary, but he is ruled by the general norms which govern the community: His life is respected, his women may not be sexually assaulted nor taken as wives without their own consent, and, above all, his children are always free and all the family property remains in their hands or those of their relatives.

Rights of the master. The master has the right to make free use of his bond servants in all the manual labors he considers necessary /149/ and the right to sell them, but no matter how often the bond servant changes masters, the sale refers to the use of his labor, not to his person.

Sexual life of bond servants. Women bought as bond servants are not sexually under the control of their masters or of his family. However, when their consanguineous relatives live so far away that they cannot exercise their influence, female bond servants are taken advantage of by their masters, not by right but by act. This situation of relative sexual freedom means that they are besieged by men more than are slave women, as the latter are protected by their master. As a consequence [548] of this state of affairs, female bond servants frequently become prostitutes through not having the protection either of their masters or of their relatives.

It may happen that the owner falls in love with one of his bond servants and has sexual relations with her, in which case his wife ill-treats her and turns her out; then the master may decide to buy her from her relatives, continue to cohabit with her (polygamy), and not infrequently he may abandon his first home.

If a bond servant should become pregnant her relatives present the claim for compensation payment to the group of the man responsible for the situation.

When a man has lived with a bond servant, and her relatives present a claim for compensation payment, two possibilities

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566 are open to him: to pay for the abuse and the troubles caused by pregnancy and birth, thereby losing all right to the woman, or to buy her as a wife. In the latter case she is liberated from the position of bond servant, since some of the money paid for her in marriage is used to pay off the debt to her master which gave rise to her bond service. The sale of the bond servant may also be negotiated directly with the master, a sum being paid to him which makes it possible to free her, and another sum being handed over to the woman's relatives.

566 Prostitution. The female bond servant, like the slave who is sold to the whites, will escape from the house where she
548 has to give her services and return to the peninsula, and if the control of her relatives in authority is absent, she readily turns to prostitution, it not being unusual that she has started this way of life during her time of service. When her relatives stand in the way, she may also prostitute herself behind their backs, trying to avoid in this way the consequences of the sexual commerce, or compensating them with part of her earnings. This situation may be considered abnormal in the Guajiro social system, as prostitution is considered to be /150/ outside the law. But when the demands of hunger are felt, due to the prolonged summer /droughts/, the situation becomes normal in the social levels less favored economically, and families have to tolerate their single women prostituting themselves and assisting with what they receive from their commerce in the maintenance of the other members.

566 Situation of the children. The children of a female bond servant are always free; frequently they work in the house of their mother's master as compensation for the cost of their keep, but legally they are free.

Trade. During the fierce summers that scorch La Guajira Peninsula, which seem to follow a 25- or 30-year cycle, the sale of human beings as bond servants becomes more intense. It is at these times that poor families are obliged to part with relatives they can do without, especially those who cannot

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566 contribute to their upkeep, with the aim of getting rid of this obligation and at the same time getting money to help sustain the rest of the family. These bond servants are sold abroad, into Venezuela and the Dutch islands and with the cities of Barranquilla, Riohacha, Santa Marta, and a large area of the department of Magdalena for work on the stock-raising haciendas; this is a trade between Indians and whites. They also sell children to other native families but on a much smaller scale, as it is rare for an Indian to buy another Indian openly in order to use him as a bond servant; for bond service among the Guajiro is usually brought about by way of payment for a theft or a debt, or by taking advantage of the weak situation of poor groups to compel them to work in service.

Persons sold as bond servants are generally children or youths who are beginning to look after themselves and can be put to work. In Venezuela these bond servants are used as agricultural hands on the haciendas, where there is a scarcity of labor due to the competition of near-by oil fields and the demand for workers in dock work, where the laborer can get higher wages. Females, wherever they may be as bond servants, are used for domestic service.

The attitude of the whites regarding the problem of bond service in La Guajira takes various forms: one is to take advantage of the native's wretched situation, in which the white figures as intermediary in the purchase of children and young people of both sexes and takes them to the /151/ buying centers to fulfill a commitment he has made to another, or else simply to resell them and make a profit. The bond servant thus is converted into an object of trade, showing a good margin of profit for the merchants who carry on this traffic. At the present time one finds cases of recruiters, owners of haciendas or managers from Venezuela who buy bond servants for agricultural work.

There is another passive atttitude that regards bond service as an established fact and tolerates it without direct intervention. Finally, there is the position taken by the Capuchin

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546 mission, which is to buy bond servants and slaves, educate them, and then return their lost freedom.

Center of forced bond service and centers of sale. The Sierra de Jarara is the region where bond service most commonly originates, because of the obligatory loss of personal freedom that results when not able to fulfill a pending obligation or pay a debt, or when a poor native, during the summer (which because of geophysical conditions is more severe here than in the rest of the peninsula), is forced by hunger to steal animals. The injured party is paid by taking away from the thief, who has no other means of paying damages, a boy or girl, usually his maternal nephew or niece.

On the other hand, the major sale center and the true distribution market for bond servants is Maicao, because of its being in Lower La Guajira which is another of the Guajira regions which suffers most cruelly from long summers and in which women do not have the economic resources which those of Upper La Guajira have, such as supplying /traders with/ woven articles, but have to live without /productive/ employment /of any sort/, and in consequence without means of supporting themselves and their families. For these reasons mothers are forced to sell both their unmarried daughters as bond servants and their younger children. The fact of Maicao's being on the only commercial route between Venezuela and Colombia is also a contributing factor. /152/

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IX

SICKNESS AND DEATH

755 "...in the aspect of Guajiro medical treatment there are four different factors which we can define in principle as follows:

1. Medicine exercised directly by the shaman through his communication with benevolent spirits.